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Chair: Mr. Tafrov ..... (Bulgaria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 28: Advancement of women (*continued*)

(a) Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/C.3/68/L.25)

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.25: Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

1. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia), said that Australia, Colombia, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Timor-Leste and Turkey had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Rural women continued to be socially and economically disadvantaged, and their empowerment should be duly reflected in future development agendas. After several rounds of informal consultations, the text had been revised to include additional second and third preambular paragraphs and an additional paragraph 9, with changes to a number of other paragraphs.

2. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congo, Cyprus, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Republic of Tanzania had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 65: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/C.3/68/L.26 and A/C.3/68/L.28)

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.26: Strengthening collaboration on child protection within the United Nations system

3. **Mr. Bamrungphong** (Thailand), introducing the draft resolution, said that Myanmar and Timor-Leste had joined the sponsors. Its main purpose was to improve the Organization's child protection efforts through increased coordination and coherence both in the normative framework and in the field among the numerous United Nations child protection mechanisms and to address any protection gaps or overlaps.

4. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Burkina Faso, Congo, Malawi, Mali and Papua New Guinea had joined the sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.28: Rights of the Child

5. **Ms. Kazragiene** (Lithuania), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the European Union and Latin American and Caribbean States, said that Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jordan, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste and Turkey had joined the sponsors. The text was a briefer version of the omnibus draft resolution submitted every five years, but maintained its traditional structure. It incorporated the latest developments, including General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions, general comments and contributions from key actors such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Special Representative on violence against children and the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. The draft addressed a comprehensive range of issues relating to the promotion and protection of children's rights, while taking into account the post-2015 development agenda.

6. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Andorra, Armenia, Burkina Faso, Congo, Liechtenstein, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea and San Marino had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 69: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/C.3/68/L.34)

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.34: The human right to water and sanitation

7. **Mr. Wittig** (Germany), introducing the draft resolution, said that Costa Rica, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Greece and Poland had joined the sponsors. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation was essential to a life of dignity and health and States had already committed to progressively realize that right. However, billions of people still had no access to improved facilities. The draft recalled the basic principles of the right to drinking water; user acceptance of sanitation solutions was of central importance as personal sanitation was a sensitive issue.

8. **Mr. González de Linares Palou** (Spain) said that the draft resolution also emphasized the responsibility of States to protect human rights and ensure that no

entity, public or private, violated those rights. Effective accountability mechanisms were a precondition for transparency and the rule of law and were therefore guarantees of a cohesive and inclusive society. Furthermore, the right to water and sanitation should be included in the post-2015 development agenda, taking into account the principles of equality and non-discrimination and the rights of the most vulnerable. While reports had highlighted a general trend of improving access to water, there had clearly been little or no progress for certain population groups, including those in rural areas. Any future efforts aiming to improve access to water and sanitation must therefore also aim to reduce inequalities, using available resources. A human rights-based approach would provide States with a flexible framework to prioritize and monitor development methods effectively. He drew attention to some editorial corrections to the text.

9. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Congo, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mali, Monaco, San Marino and Serbia had joined the sponsors.

(a) Implementation of human rights instruments (*continued*) (A/C.3/68/L.32 and A/C.3/68/L.33)

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.32: International Covenants on Human Rights

10. **Mr. Poysari** (Finland), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the main sponsors, said that El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Latvia, Monaco and Montenegro had joined the sponsors. The draft resolution was procedural in nature, similarly to the one proposed in 2011.

11. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that that Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Paraguay, Peru, the Republic of Korea and San Marino had joined the sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.33: Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

12. **Ms. Kofoed** (Denmark), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Mexico, New Zealand, Maldives, Micronesia (Federated States of), Spain, Timor-Leste and Uruguay had joined the sponsors. The current draft resolution recalled the non-derogable right of freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and highlighted the important role of national and international preventive or monitoring bodies. Accountability for attempts to hamper cooperation with such entities must be ensured. The draft resolution also highlighted the need for full access to redress for victims of torture and prompt availability of rehabilitation services.

13. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Andorra, Burkina Faso, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and San Marino had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 108: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/68/L.21)

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.21: Preventing and combating corrupt practices and the transfer of proceeds of corruption, facilitating asset recovery and returning such assets to legitimate owners, in particular to countries of origin, in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption

14. **Mr. Ruiz** (Colombia), introducing the draft resolution, said that corruption had a negative impact on development and on the legitimacy of institutions and their proper functioning. Member States were urged to continue focusing on the recovery of assets arising from corruption and the return of such assets to their legitimate owners in accordance with the provisions of chapter five of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Despite the significant progress made, a very low percentage of the funds of illicit origin from developing countries had been returned to the countries of origin, largely because countries encountered technical and legal difficulties in detecting transfers of the proceeds of crime and corruption. States parties should cooperate in the identification and recovery of stolen assets and should give particular and timely consideration to requests for international mutual legal assistance.

15. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Armenia, Malawi, Mongolia, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Tunisia and Tanzania had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*)

(d) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all (*continued*) (A/C.3/68/L.12/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.12/Rev.1: Literacy for Life: Shaping future agendas

16. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

17. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia) said that Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Cyprus, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uruguay had joined the sponsors.

18. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Malawi, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen had joined the sponsors.

19. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.12/Rev.1 was adopted.*

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/68/L.13/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.13/Rev.1: Cooperatives in social development

20. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

21. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia) said that Austria, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Hungary, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Thailand, Turkey and Uruguay had joined the sponsors.

22. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Madagascar, Malawi, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay and Serbia had joined the sponsors.

23. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.13/Rev.1 was adopted.*

Agenda item 69: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/67/931; A/68/56, A/68/176, A/68/177, A/68/185, A/68/207, A/68/208, A/68/209, A/68/210 and A/68/210/Add.1, A/68/211, A/68/224, A/68/225, A/68/256, A/68/261, A/68/262, A/68/268, A/68/277, A/68/279, A/68/283, A/68/284, A/68/285, A/68/287, A/68/288, A/68/289, A/68/290, A/68/292, A/68/293, A/68/294, A/68/296, A/68/297, A/68/298, A/68/299, A/68/301, A/68/304, A/68/323, A/68/345, A/68/362, A/68/382 and A/68/382/Corr.1, A/68/389, A/68/390 and A/68/496)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/68/276, A/68/319, A/68/331, A/68/376, A/68/377, A/68/392, A/68/397 and A/68/503; A/C.3/68/3 and A/C.3/68/4)

24. **Ms. Sutikno** (Indonesia) said that her Government had been engaging constructively with various human rights mandate holders and treaty bodies, and had extended invitations to a number of United Nations special mandate holders to visit Indonesia. Indonesia and Iceland had been co-facilitating the General Assembly process on the strengthening of human rights treaty bodies for the past two years and welcomed resolution 68/2 on the extension of the intergovernmental process. Constructive dialogue and cooperation between treaty bodies and States would help to avoid duplication and overlap in the discharge of their mandates.

25. Attaching great importance to the implementation of its commitments under the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, her Government was implementing a third National Plan of Action on Human Rights, which incorporated all ratified international human rights instruments, and offered the public more opportunities to channel their grievances on human rights issues.

26. As the world's third largest democracy, Indonesia understood the challenges of peacebuilding and of protecting human rights. It had introduced major reforms in the rule of law, governance, human rights, political processes, elections, media development, civil

society and women's participation. Indonesia welcomed the positive developments in countries that had recently transitioned to democracy. The international community should assist such Governments to assume their core functions through constructive dialogue and cooperation. Careful observation was necessary to produce a sustainable, situation-appropriate solution.

27. Indonesia attached great importance to the promotion and protection of migrant workers, including the approximately 4.3 million Indonesian migrant workers abroad. Her Government was strengthening the relevant national legislation and institutional frameworks, had improved inter-agency coordination and policy implementation and had enhanced the protection efforts of Indonesian missions abroad. In addition to having ratified various relevant international conventions, it was also working with countries of employment, and had established a moratorium on sending migrant workers to countries that did not guarantee their protection. Indonesia had also proposed legal instruments within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and had worked consistently to ensure adoption of the General Assembly resolution on violence against women migrant workers.

28. **Mr. Diane** (Botswana) said that although each State enjoyed the inalienable right to choose its political, economic, social and cultural systems without external interference, they should strictly observe the fundamental human rights set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

29. Human rights violations, including gender violence and child trafficking, deteriorating humanitarian situations, and the rising numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees in situations of political and economic instability had overstretched the financial and human resources of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Member States should put an end to impunity by fulfilling their national and international human rights obligations. Civil society played a role of paramount importance in the promotion and protection of human rights, and States should ensure the protection of all human rights defenders.

30. With regard to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Botswana was implementing the ideals set out in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. States should investigate all crimes of a racist or xenophobic nature and take appropriate measures against those found responsible.

31. The Inter Ministerial Committee on Treaties, Conventions and Protocols ensured that every citizen enjoyed their rights. In that regard, consultations were under way to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to withdraw reservations to article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, among others.

32. His Government had extended invitations to the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights and the Independent Expert on minority issues to visit the country in 2014. Fully committed to a strong and effective multilateral human rights treaty body system, his Government looked forward to the conclusion of the intergovernmental process on the strengthening and enhancing of the effective functioning of the system.

33. Botswana had undergone its second universal periodic review in January 2013. The Human Rights Council had proved to be an effective global human rights body. As a member of the Council, Botswana had actively engaged with other Member States and was seeking an additional term in 2015-2017.

34. **Mr. Tupouniua** (Tonga) said that although his Government had achieved some success in advancing human rights, further progress would depend on genuine, durable partnerships with developed States. Tonga had receive praise for its serious engagement with the universal periodic review process, its work with domestic and international human rights groups, and its recent transition to democratic rule. Civil rights and freedom of religion were protected, and freedom of the press was also being strengthened. Both the judicial and law enforcement systems operated according to the rule of law and the judiciary operated independently. Legislation provided for extensive protection against police abuses and standard treatment of all prisoners. National and local civil society groups were working to help persons with disabilities realize their rights and combat discrimination. Education was compulsory and near-universal literacy had been achieved.

35. Despite those achievements, Tonga continued to struggle in some areas and steps had been taken to combat corruption in government. Measures to

promote the advancement of women included the development of a national policy on gender and development and the creation of a domestic violence unit within the police force. In 2010, the Government had instituted a policy to prohibit the police from dropping domestic violence charges at their sole discretion. Police and civil society groups had conducted domestic violence prevention campaigns, and an increasing number of studies were being carried out on that topic. In addition, continuing efforts were being made to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. More women were participating in government and at the highest levels of the private sector.

36. His Government's ability to address those issues was challenged by the lack of funding. Some periodic reports to treaty bodies had not yet been submitted to treaty bodies for lack of human and financial resources. Creating a national human rights institution in a country with a population of just over 100,000 and limited resources was a great challenge. His Government welcomed genuine and durable partnerships to assist it in realizing its human rights aspirations.

37. **Ms. Mansouri** (Algeria) said that a number of laws, regulations and internal mechanisms had been implemented in the area of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Over the past decade, a number of development plans had led to unprecedented progress in terms of the standard of living and various youth programmes had been established. A five-year $286 billion investment plan had been adopted to develop infrastructure and reduce economic dependency on hydrocarbons.

38. Although Algeria recognized the universality of human rights, there was not just one valid model for social or political organization. The universality of human rights should be based on the recognition of cultural, historical and geographic specificity, as had been reflected in the Vienna Declaration, and on international standards and principles of law such as the sovereignty of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and respect for political, economic and social systems chosen by the people.

39. The Human Rights Council had been established as a forum for dialogue and cooperation to promote and protect human rights without any selectivity or politicization. Improvements in the situation of human rights in any country should therefore be viewed with consideration given to their level of development, diversity, individual situations and specificities. To preserve the achievements of the Vienna Declaration, it was important to conduct thorough and objective evaluations of its implementation of the Declaration in the context of the Human Rights Council.

40. Becoming a State party to international human rights instruments should not be a selective process. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, for example, had been ratified mainly by the countries of origin, but not by the host countries.

41. The right to self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation constituted a pre-requisite for an international order based on respect for human rights. Human rights were indissociable from the rights of peoples. The international community still faced challenges related to the implementation of the rights of peoples to peace, self-determination, development, and the right to live without fear in an environment that preserved the ecological balance of the planet.

42. Algeria had played an active role in institution-building process of the Human Rights Council, and it would be seeking a new term for 2014-2016. That decision demonstrated Algeria's dedication to democratic progress and constructive cooperation and also reaffirmed its commitment to contribute to the strengthening of the Council's efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights.

43. **Ms. Mballa Eyenga** (Cameroon) said that the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa had contributed significantly to the promotion of human rights and the advancement of democracy in the subregion. Her country welcomed, in particular, its capacity-building activities and its cooperation with Member States and civil society, which had supported the development of a culture of human rights and democracy in central Africa.

44. Cameroon also welcomed the Centre's programme for transitional justice, which had included the hosting of three regional conferences. The Centre had provided forums for dialogue and the exchange of good practices through national and regional workshops, had implemented a digital platform dedicated to transitional justice in French-speaking Africa, and had also contributed to the strengthening of national human rights institutions. Her Government

appreciated the assistance provided by the Centre in connection with the universal periodic review and national reports to the human rights treaty bodies.

45. It was important to maintain the Centre's funding, in view of its crucial role in the subregion. To ensure its effectiveness, it should work in synergy with the States of the subregion and define its priorities in accordance with the Strategic Management Plan of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

46. **Mr. Nina** (Albania) said that the General Assembly resolution calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty was promoting a gradual reduction in the number of offences for which capital punishment could be imposed and the progressive restriction of its use. His Government called on countries that had resumed executions to reconsider their decision.

47. Acts of violence against individuals, particularly those belonging to religious minorities, were cause for concern. In that context, Albania had co-hosted the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) High-level Conference on Tolerance and Non-discrimination on 21 and 22 May 2013. In light of ongoing economic hardship and growing tension, those topics should remain high on the OSCE agenda.

48. Albania would be a candidate for membership of the Human Rights Council for the 2015-2017 term. The situation of human rights had improved dramatically in South-Eastern Europe, particularly Kosovo, which had recently begun formal negotiations for a stabilization and association agreement with the European Union. The Government looked forward to the November elections and welcomed the European Union's decision to deploy an election observation mission to observe the process. His Government encouraged all citizens of Kosovo to vote.

49. His Government was deeply concerned about the fate of the more than 1,800 persons in Kosovo, mostly Albanians, who remained missing 14 year after the conflict. Propaganda had rarely contributed to reconciliation and should be avoided when dealing with the past. Instead, priority should be given to facts, evidence and the rule of law. The region had much to gain by looking forward and building on the best examples of bilateral and regional cooperation.

50. **Mr. Umemoto** (Japan) said that his country had been active in efforts to improve both domestic and international human rights situations through various multilateral frameworks as well as through bilateral dialogues with various countries, including Myanmar and Iran, thereby contributing to the improvement of the situations in those countries. Japan had appreciated the progress made by the Security Council and other actors in the effort to decommission chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and continued to support efforts to prevent the use of such weapons in the future. However, his delegation was deeply dismayed at the lack of progress concerning the continuing desperate human rights and security situation of the Syrian people. Strongly condemning all forms of violence and human rights violations in the Syrian Arab Republic, Japan called on the Government to take the necessary measures to end violations and to support progress through a political transition process led by the Syrian people. He also urged the Government to cooperate fully with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

51. He joined other delegations in expressing grave concern about human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and that country's reluctance to cooperate with human rights mechanisms. A draft resolution calling for the improvement of the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to be submitted by Japan and the European Union, also addressed the troubling issue of the abduction of Japanese nationals. No progress had been made in the ten years since the first summit meeting between the two States: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had still not returned 12 of the 17 confirmed abductees and had failed to provide credible accounts of their whereabouts. Those abductions, which had also affected citizens of other nationalities, were a grave violation of human rights and, in view of the age of the abductees, should be resolved as a matter of urgency.

52. Despite a number of positive signals since the inauguration of the new President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Japan's intention to continue its dialogue and cooperation, concern about the continued limitation of freedom of expression and use of cruel punishment. He called on the Iranian Government to ratify the relevant human rights instruments at the earliest possible date and to cooperate with the international community by allowing access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

53. Japan was greatly encouraged by the various measures taken by the Government of Myanmar toward democratization, national reconciliation and economic reform and continued to provide assistance to that country. However, it was still concerned at the communal conflict in Rakhine State: the violence must cease and the Government of Myanmar and other stakeholders should work to make further progress in the national reconciliation process while the international community should cooperate to create an enabling environment.

54. Cambodia still faced several challenges despite gradual improvements over the past 20 years, and his delegation encouraged the new Cambodian Government to continue and accelerate progress and to cooperate with the international community. The consensual adoption by the Human Rights Council of the resolution on the human rights situation in Cambodia had been a good model of dialogue and cooperation.

55. **Ms. Leshkova** (Belarus) said that her country gave maximum attention to promoting and protecting all human rights and actively cooperated with the Human Rights Council and human rights protection mechanisms. Belarus had already fulfilled most of the recommendations made during its first cycle of the universal periodic review in 2010 and was actively preparing for the second cycle in 2015. Belarus also fulfilled its reporting obligations to other mechanisms: in 2013 the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had been impressed by a number of Belarusian initiatives, including employment and education measures for the Roma and Sinti populations; a report would soon be submitted Committee on Economic and Social and Cultural rights.

56. She expressed deep concern at the rapid increase in human rights violations in so-called mature democracies. Western States were increasingly associated with issues such as racial discrimination, neo fascism, heavy-handed or violent repression of demonstrations and attacks on moral and spiritual values. The increasing activity of right-wing parties in Germany, the violation of journalists' rights to personal safety and freedom of expression in the United Kingdom, the recent acquittal of individuals accused of desecration of monuments in Warsaw and the rise in neo-nationalist tendencies targeting Roma and Sinti in the Czech Republic and other countries showed that States were not upholding their obligations to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. Belarus had prepared a report on the human rights violations perpetrated by advanced democracies which wrongly portrayed themselves as teachers of human rights. The 2012 report was available from the Secretariat and a new report would be issued at the end of 2013.

57. The use of unilateral measures of economic coercion as a form of political pressure on sovereign States was intolerable. States employing such measures as instruments of foreign policy ignored the fact that they undermined the economic and social rights of individuals in the States on which sanctions had been imposed. Her delegation called for the establishment of a special procedure of the Human Rights Council to assess the impact of unilateral coercive measures on the rights of such populations. The imposition of sanctions by the European Union and the United States was unacceptable.

58. Belarus advocated an improvement in the working methods and form of the main human rights treaty bodies. It was concerned that instead of providing genuine practical and expert assistance to States for the implementation of treaty obligations, Committees, including the Human Rights Committee, and individual experts were inappropriately assuming the function of judges. A cavalier attitude to States' positions and the manipulation in bad faith of unconfirmed information from questionable sources was interpreted as independence. The concept of responsibility to the States that elected them was being diluted by such actions. There was a need to rapidly develop a code of conduct for the members of treaty bodies and to enhance accountability of treaty bodies with regard to the conferences of States parties to the corresponding treaties.

59. **Mr. McLay** (New Zealand) said that his country's long-standing support for the human rights treaty body system was evidenced by its standing invitation to all holders of United Nations Special Procedures mandates and strong support for the universal periodic review process. The recent waves of change across parts of North Africa and the Middle East continued to present both opportunities and challenges for promoters of human rights. While some countries had maintained solid progress, others had

encountered significant setbacks and reversals. In the longer term, such countries faced few alternatives to finding ways to accommodate citizens' demands for greater freedoms and more inclusive political systems. For there to be lasting progress, a wide range of actors from civil society must be included and the international community must continue to extend its full support.

60. Civil society and human rights defenders should not have to fear reprisals or intimidation; they played a crucial role at domestic and international levels in protecting and promoting human rights and in promoting democracy and the rule of law. The situation in the Syrian Arab Republic revealed the grim consequences of addressing political demands with military solutions. The list of atrocities against civilians in both government- and opposition-held areas was too long and well-documented to be ignored or credibly denied; and the ever-swelling numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons had highlighted the plight of innocent victims of armed conflict. Renewed efforts must be directed towards ending the carnage before it spread further. The only sustainable solution would be through an inclusive, Syrian-led political settlement addressing the root causes of the conflict.

61. No society could expect to reach its full potential when it denied basic rights and full participation to more than half of its population. Too many women and girls continued to face multiple barriers and to experience horrific sexual and gender-based violence and abuse. Significant collective efforts to promote the rights of women and girls the world over included the landmark agreement by the Commission on the Status of Women on measures to combat all forms of violence against women and girls. It was the shared responsibility of the international community to take forward the practical implementation of those agreed conclusions as a matter of priority. Thirteen years after the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), it was time for action. His delegation called for equal attention to be paid to other fundamental challenges to women and girls' full enjoyment of human rights, including in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. New Zealand would continue to work in partnership with the international community to address new challenges and to secure human rights and fundamental freedoms.

62. **Ms. Hernando** (Philippines) said that in addition to its Constitution, the Philippines had a comprehensive domestic legal framework that complemented the core international human rights treaties and other related instruments to which the country was a party, including: the National Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities, the Magna Carta of Women, the Anti-Torture Act and the Philippine Act on Crimes against International Humanitarian Law, Genocide, and Other Crimes against Humanity.

63. A people-centred, human rights-based approach lay at the core of national policies and programmes. The Philippine Development Plan for 2011-2016 implemented the President's social contract with the people through key strategies for inclusive growth through the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. Full advancement of human rights, however, could only be achieved by complementing domestic efforts with bilateral, regional, and international cooperation to address issues of common concern.

64. Her delegation welcomed the Declaration of the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which gave priority to human rights. Migration must rest on principled foundations to ensure its smooth, safe and orderly flow. The Philippines had always maintained the importance of protecting the human rights of individuals, backed by the principles of fairness, equity and the rule of law. She endorsed the conclusions in the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion and protection of human rights, including ways and means to promote the human rights of migrants (A/68/292) with regard to the ability of educated, healthy, and empowered migrants to lift themselves and their families out of poverty and contribute to the wider community and economy.

65. The Philippines once again called on Member States to consider the ratification and enforcement of the relevant human rights instruments as well as the relevant International Labour Organization conventions and to implement the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

66. Her delegation continued to advocate and support discussions on the right to development, as reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Economic, social and environmental concerns were interlinked and human rights were integral to those concerns; it was therefore important to adopt a people-

centred approach to development. However, the imperative of development seemed not to have been given due attention. As the international community prepared to frame a collective vision for a post-2015 development framework, it should take the opportunity to strengthen efforts to work towards the realization of the right to development and to create a better quality of life for all.

67. **Ms. Mainali** (Nepal) said that Nepal attached great significance to human rights principles in general and firmly upheld its national and international commitments to their promotion and protection. The Interim Constitution of Nepal of 2007 reaffirmed the country's commitment to human rights by guaranteeing fundamental political, social, cultural and economic rights to citizens. Accordingly, several domestic laws ensured the rights of all sectors of society, including women and children, and marginalized and deprived communities. Nepal was also a party to 24 human rights conventions and protocols, including seven core international human rights instruments, and, despite years of armed conflict, continued the efforts to institutionalize its achievements and implement the recommendations and commitments made during the universal periodic review process.

68. The National Human Rights Commission, with five regional and three subregional offices, continued to work as a watchdog for the promotion and protection of human rights in Nepal, investigating alleged cases of human rights violations and recommending action to be taken against perpetrators. The current three-year National Human Rights Action Plan focused on a number of vital areas including education, health, labour and employment, environment and sustainable development and law and prison reform. The Government was making concerted capacity-building efforts for all national human rights institutions and for media and civil society organizations. The Office of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers was responsible for overall coordination of human rights matters.

69. The advancement of women continued to top the national agenda, with efforts for women's empowerment made in all spheres. The Government was implementing Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) through a national plan of action and related national strategies and plans to eliminate gender-based violence and promote gender empowerment. The right to development was central to the Government's plan to eradicate poverty and hunger; the current thirteenth Development Plan had therefore adopted a rights-based approach to development with a focus on the rights of vulnerable groups.

70. Migrants, despite their contribution to overall development worldwide, tended to be among the most vulnerable groups in terms of enjoyment of their human rights. Serious and concerted efforts were needed to address that problem and protect the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families in the post-2015 development agenda. Nepal urged the United Nations system, Bretton Woods Institutions and development partners to provide enhanced and predictable support in order to enable developing countries to protect and promote human rights and ensure long-term and sustainable development.

71. **Mr. Azazi** (Eritrea) said that the Committee often focused on certain rights while ignoring others, which was not a useful approach as it hierarchized the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental rights, contrary to the established principles of human rights law. The same emphasis should be given to all universally recognized rights. Eritreans had made enormous sacrifices in their long fight for self-determination and the country's priority had been to ensure peace and security and accelerate the development agenda for its people, despite the many threats and challenges.

72. Eritrea's policy of social justice and social cohesion aimed to promote and protect equal rights, equal participation and equitable sharing of resources. The judicious use of the country's limited human, financial and natural resources to meet developmental challenges was helping to rebuild an economy twice-ravaged by war: food security had improved, despite the cyclical drought, desertification and land degradation affecting the region; the greater part of the national budget was earmarked for free universal education from primary to tertiary levels; and between 1993 and 2011, child and maternal mortality rates had fallen drastically while life expectancy had risen. The Government had enacted laws and was building its human and institutional capital to ensure good governance and full participation of all nationals in public life. New legislative measures had been introduced and magistrates elections had been held to promote the rule of law and ensure good governance.

73. However, Eritrea was aware that those modest achievements fell short of expectations. Regional peace, security and cooperation were also vital for Eritrea and the wider region to flourish and focus on the full enjoyment of all human rights. Constructive dialogue and cooperation were important for improving the human rights situation on the ground; the universal periodic review provided such a forum on an equal footing for every country, despite the attempts of a few countries to undermine the process and revert to old habits of selectivity, double standards and politicization.

74. **Ms. Abubakar** (Libya) said that respect for human rights was essential for promoting peace and security, combating violence and advancing sustainable development; the harsh events experienced by her people in 2011 clearly demonstrated what could happen if human rights and fundamental freedoms were not respected.

75. Libya remained true to its obligations under all of the international human rights agreements that it had signed. Protection of human rights was a priority for the Libyan interim Government. Any violations, including arbitrary detention and torture, committed by certain groups or individuals must not go unpunished. Such acts were contrary to international and domestic law and to the objectives of the 17 February revolution, which had brought an end to the dictatorship. They did not reflect Libya's official position.

76. In coordination with the General National Congress, the Libyan Government had taken various steps towards promoting and protecting human rights. It had enacted a law on transitional justice to ensure that civilian cases were not brought before military courts and a law criminalizing torture, enforced disappearance and discrimination. A draft law to compensate victims of crimes of violence and rape that had occurred during the 17 February revolution was currently before the General National Congress. Legislation inconsistent with Libya's human rights obligations was being amended or repealed. Libya had taken action to accede to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. An independent National Council for Public Liberties and Human Rights and a Government human rights commission had been established. The Government had begun cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for technical assistance and capacity-building, in implementation of Human Rights Council decision 19/39. She expressed gratitude to the United Nations and its specialized agencies for providing technical assistance to support Libya's transition to democracy and help reinforce the rule of law and involve women in politics and decision-making. Her Government hoped that a date would soon be set for the High Commissioner of Human Rights to visit Libya and was willing to receive a visit from the Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries.

77. Illegal immigration was the source of many humanitarian, health, security and economic problems in Libya. Regional and international efforts were required in order to foster development in source countries to reduce the negative impact of illegal immigration on destination and transit countries and prevent exploitation of migrants by criminal organizations. One of the most positive outcomes of the revolution was the legalization of non-governmental and civil society organizations, which now played an important role in promoting human rights and civil liberties.

78. **Mr. Kandangha-Bariki** (Togo) said that his country had ratified and become a State party to several international and regional human rights instruments. It had enacted a law incorporating all the rights set out in those instruments and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

79. With regard to civil and political rights, the death penalty had been abolished in 2009 and the Constitution protected the physical integrity of citizens. Togo had ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as the Optional Protocol thereto in June 2010. In compliance with the relevant provisions, Togo had implemented a national mechanism to prevent torture.

80. The Government was also taking steps to combat impunity and had created the Justice, Trust and Reconciliation Commission to shed light on politically motivated acts of violence committed between 1958 and 2005. More than 18,000 requests had been recorded and several hearings had been held. Subsequently, the Togolese authorities had decided to

set up an independent commission for reconciliation and the strengthening of national unity.

81. Togo had developed an accelerated growth and employment strategy with a view to reducing poverty. Three laws had been enacted to strengthen the existing legal framework for economic, social and cultural rights. In addition, programmes had been launched in the following areas: agricultural investment and food security, to increase the revenue of farmers and improve living conditions for vulnerable rural populations; education, with a view to increasing the rate of school attendance; and the reduction of maternal mortality.

82. Togo was a State party to the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. It had adopted a national equity and equality policy in 2011, in addition to laws on reproductive health and the prohibition of female genital mutilation.

83. Togo had also introduced the principle of parity in elective posts and posts of authority, which had led to measures to promote parity on electoral lists for the 25 July 2013 election campaigns. The number of women in the National Assembly had increased, and three of them held positions in the five-member bureau.

84. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto had been adopted in 2011. In addition, the national strategy for promotion and protection of persons with disabilities had been approved in March 2013.

85. Togo had submitted some of its initial and periodic reports, but was experiencing difficulties in implementing the recommendations made by the treaty bodies. Togo was aware of the additional efforts needed to effectively protect and promote human rights and would increase its efforts in that regard. However, its goal could not be realized without the cooperation of other States and concerned entities. For that reason, it asked the international community to assist it on its path to the full realization of fundamental rights and public freedoms for all citizens.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

86. **Ms. Sucuoğlu** (Turkey) said that his delegation regretted the politicization of the Third Committee and the attempts to convey a selective, unilateral interpretation of history. Turkish Cypriots had been forced out of the government institutions and legislative and judiciary organs of Cyprus in 1963, and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus had been deployed in 1964. During the 10 years that had followed, 180,000 persons had been confined to enclaves covering only 3 per cent of the island. Following a military coup in 1974 aimed at annexing Cyprus to Greece, Turkey had intervened in accordance with its international responsibilities as a guarantor Power.

87. Turkish Cypriots had voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem, but continued to live in isolation. The international community should engage in direct economic, commercial, social and cultural contacts with Turkish Cypriots to end the injustice without further delay.

88. Despite the attempts to block initiatives involving funds and technical support provided by international institutions and third parties, the Turkish Cypriot authorities had spent more than $400,000 on cultural heritage restoration projects, including 15 Greek Orthodox churches. In that vein, her Government welcomed the European Commission's project to support the work of the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage. Finally, contrary to a common misconception, there were Turkish Cypriots among the missing persons mentioned by the representative of Cyprus. Turkish Cypriot authorities were endeavouring to ensure that the work of the Third Committee proceeded unhindered.

89. **Mr. Makriyiannis** (Cyprus) said he regretted that the representative of Turkey had distorted historical facts. The 1974 coup d'état had ended in failure only days after its launch; yet the Turkish occupation of over one third of the territory of Cyprus had continued to the present day. The so-called isolation of Turkish Cypriots was a myth. As full citizens of Cyprus, they enjoyed all the rights, freedoms and privileges of Cypriot and European Union citizens and used Cypriot passports to move, study and settle freely, enjoying worldwide diplomatic assistance. Turkish Cypriots were able to participate in regional and international sporting and cultural events and could work as civil servants. They also received free medical care. Turkish Cypriots had received millions of euros in economic assistance from Cyprus and the European Union.

Meanwhile, Turkish troops continued to occupy 37 per cent of a sovereign State, denying the Cypriot people their basic human rights and their hopes for a prosperous future in a reunited homeland. To achieve a lasting peace in the region, Turkey should implement all United Nations resolutions, recall its troops from Cyprus and restore the human rights of all Cypriots.

90. **Ms. Gültekin** (Turkey) regretted that the Third Committee was used as a platform to misrepresent facts that her Government had already categorically rejected. The Syrian Arab Republic could not dissuade Turkey from supporting the Syrian people. Her Government rejected the baseless allegations made by the Syrian delegation. Both Turkey's position and its contribution to the efforts of the international community to assist the Syrian people were well-known. It would continue to support the Syrian people during that difficult period.

91. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the delegations of Australia, Canada and Norway had failed to mention the monstrous practice of heart-eating carried out by terrorists in the Syrian Arab Republic. They had also failed to call on Member States to combat Al-Qaida in the country and put pressure on Turkey to stop smuggling jihadist fighters into Syrian territory. Nevertheless, United Nations officials, including the members of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, had repeatedly confirmed and conclusively proved that heinous crimes were being committed in the Syrian Arab Republic by *takfirist* terrorists who were being smuggled into the country through Turkey and Jordan, and financed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

92. She expressed surprise that the representative of Canada should call for civilian protection around the world when his own Government had massacred, displaced and isolated indigenous people and was preventing over 150,000 indigenous children from practising their religious rites at school.

93. The Syrian Arab Republic, which was home to an ancient civilization dating back tens of thousands of years, refused to accept any advice on human rights from Lichtenstein, a Statelet without history that had been created as a result of deals between European colonial powers.

94. The slander and lies of the Qatari regime were perfectly in keeping with its policy of supporting global terrorism. It was laughable to hear comments on human rights from the representative of a regime that denied its people basic rights such as freedom of expression; the 15-year prison sentence recently handed down to a Qatari poet for criticizing the country's rulers was a case in point. She invited the representative of Qatar to study the Syrian Constitution and parliament, and report back on them to Qatar, which had clearly never heard of those concepts.

95. **Mr. Al-Himali** (Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation was tired of hearing the endless, unfounded claims made against his country by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in order to divert global attention away from the crimes of violence, rape and murder that were being perpetrated against the Syrian people.

96. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Syrian delegation would continue to refer to Saudi Arabia's practice of supporting terrorism in the Syrian Arab Republic by sending *takfirist* terrorist groups there for as long as Saudi Arabia continued to do so.

97. **Mr. Kim** Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the issues referred to by the representative of Japan had been completely resolved. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea had fulfilled its part of all agreements, although the Government of Japan had not done so. Instead, Japan was drawing attention to groundless allegations concerning the abduction of foreign nationals — allegations unworthy of being entertained. Japan should account for the life, death and whereabouts of the 8.4 million Koreans abducted and potentially drafted by the Japanese army, and the over 200,000 women forced into sexual slavery during the Second World War. Japan should understand that it would not escape responsibility, criticism or condemnation for its crimes.

98. **Mr. Hisajima** (Japan) said that, contrary to the statements made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the abduction issue had not been resolved. Following the working level consultations in June and August 2008, both Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had agreed on the objectives and modalities of a full-scale investigation. Determined to resolve the issue completely, his Government urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to ensure the safe and immediate return of all abductees, to provide a full account of each abduction case, and to extradite those

responsible. There were reports, including by the Special Rapporteur, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had abducted the citizens of other nations as well.

99. His Government urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to listen to the repeated expressions of concern made by the international community with regard to the abduction issue and other human rights violations, and to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

100. With regard to historical events, the figures mentioned by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were groundless. It was true that during a certain period in the past, Japan had caused great suffering to many, including the peoples of a number of Asian nations. However, his Government had squarely faced those facts and had expressed a heartfelt apology. It sincerely mourned all victims of the Second World War. Based on those deep feelings of remorse, Japan had built a nation that respected freedom, democracy and the rule of law, and had contributed to democracy for the last 80 years. Its work to build a peaceful nation had been acknowledged worldwide.

101. **Mr. Kim** Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his country rejected the misleading remarks made by the representative of Japan. His Government had faithfully implemented all agreements, including the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. All survivors had returned home, and all relevant information had been provided to Japan. His Government had done its utmost; Japan, conversely, had not, and had at times even acted in opposition to the agreement. Japan continued to talk about the abduction issue when it had already been resolved. In so doing, Japan attempted to cover up its systematic, widespread and deplorable crimes against humanity, and to avoid providing an apology and compensation to the victims.

102. The representative of Japan had called the assertions made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea groundless. He drew attention to the report of the Special Rapporteur on violations against women in 1996 and the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery in 1998, which had confirmed the responsibility of Japan for systematic and widespread crimes against humanity, and had urged the Government of Japan to pay compensation to the individual victims of Japanese military sexual slavery, set up an administrative tribunal for punishment of the perpetrators of that crime and to make a public apology. Japan should understand that the lives of people of all nations were of equal importance.

103. **Mr. Hisajima** (Japan) said that, in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration, Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had agreed that, once bilateral relations were normalized, both sides would discuss and mutually waive all property and other claims for damages that had occurred prior to 15 August 1945.

104. His Government, in accordance with its policy of dialogue and pressure, was committed to resolving the outstanding issues of concern, including the abduction, nuclear and missile issues. It urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete action to comprehensively resolve them.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.